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Ex Parte Presentation

to the

Federal-Joint State Board on Universal Service

**"Foundation for the Future" :
A Partnership Concept for Ensuring Universal
K-12 Access to Telecommunication Technologies**

Presented by:

**Georgia Tech Research Institute, Morris Brown Research Institute
and
Christopher Evans, Industry Liaison Representative**

September 6, 1996

Submitted to:

**The Federal Communication Commission Office of the Secretary
William F. Caton
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554**

REF. Docket Number 96-45

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**The September 6, 1996 Ex Parte Federal-Joint State Board on Universal Service
"Foundation for the Future" presentation: A Partnership Concept for Ensuring Universal
K-12 Access to Telecommunication Technologies**

Georgia Tech Research Institute Representatives, Claudia Huff and Jeff Evans, Morris Brown Research Institute Representative, Roosevelt Thomas and Industry Liaison Representative, Christopher Evans submit the following information to the FCC's Office of the Secretary under proceeding Docket number 96-45.

Information contained in the these documents were provided to the Joint-State Board Universal System during a Ex Parte meeting in the 8th floor conference room at 2100 M Street, NW., Washington, DC, at 2:00 p.m. September 6, 1996.

The FCC participants (attachment 1) were provided presentation material addressing principles in Section 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 which call for:

- 1) rural and urban elementary and secondary schools, libraries, and health care providers to have access to advanced telecommunication services, and
- 2) regular inquires be conducted to see that advanced telecommunications are in fact becoming accessible.

Proposal Summary:

We proposed establishing pilot program in the State of Georgia comprised of higher education providing unbiased technology information in the following three key functions referred to as "Foundations for the Future":

- 1) Brokering technology information
- 2) Providing technical assistance in funding awareness and processing
- 3) Providing target training

These services are proposed to both rural and urban decision makers at the local level to ensure quality informed purchasing decisions.

This approach leverages existing resources in a partnership model for ensuring universal K-12 access to telecommunication technologies. Following the pilot phase, we proposed assisting in the replication of the program throughout the nation on a state-by-state basis while monitoring and reporting information accumulated on the program on a as needed basis to the FCC Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, state and local education decision makers.

ATTACHMENT - 1

List of September 6, 1996 Ex Parte Federal-Joint State Board on Universal Service participants provided presentation information on the "Foundation for the Future" presentation: A Partnership Concept for Ensuring Universal K-12 Access to Telecommunication Technologies

- 1)_ Irene Flannery
Federal Communications Commission**
- 2) Debra Kriete
Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission**
- 3) Mark Long
Florida Public Service Commission**
- 4) Sam Loudenslager
Arkansas Public Service Commission**
- 5) Terry Monroe
New York Public Service Commission**
- 6) Mark Nadel
Federal Communication Commission**
- 7) Lee Palagyi
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission**
- 8) Paul Pederson
State Staff Chair
Missouri Public Service Commission**

September 6, 1996 Ex Parte Federal-Joint State Board on Universal Service participants in the "Foundation for the Future" presentation: A Partnership Concept for Ensuring Universal K-12 Access to Telecommunication Technologies made the following request for addition information:

- 1) Provide legal argument using Section 254 of the Telecommunication Act of 1996 to justify funding of your proposed plan.
- 2) Provide a projection of potential saving associated with the implementation of your proposal.

Information is requested to be added to Docket 96-45 with-in ten (10) working days of the September 6, Ex Parte date.

INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), Morris Brown Research Institute (MBRI) and industry liaison Christopher Evans, are pleased to submit this concept for consideration by the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service. Our concept addresses principles in Section 254 of the Telecommunication Act of 1996 which call for:

- 1) rural and urban elementary and secondary schools, libraries, and health care providers to have access to advanced telecommunication services, and
- 2) regular inquiries be conducted to see that advanced telecommunications are in fact becoming accessible.

We propose establishing a pilot program in the State of Georgia comprised of higher education technical assistance providers tasked with assisting K-12 decision-makers in wisely spending their limited technology dollars. This approach leverages existing resources in a partnership model for ensuring universal K-12 access to telecommunications technologies. Following the pilot phase, we will assist in the replication of the program throughout the nation on a state-by-state basis and monitor and report information accumulated on the program to the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service.

WHO WE ARE

GTRI and MBRI are higher education-affiliated, non-profit, contract-funded entities which provide research, training, and technical assistance services. Christopher Evans will work as part of GTRI and MBRI in a industry liaison capacity, coordinating industry assistance in the consultive process including accumulating information on available industry funding or equipment opportunities for K-12. We have a strong business orientation combined with relevant expertise and experience. In implementing this concept, we would be building on existing collaborative efforts and an extensive state investment in infrastructure and facilities.

For example, the Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology, a state initiative for advancing telecommunication research in Georgia representing a research investment of over \$50 million in the last 3 years, and the \$26 million physical facility in Atlanta includes 200,000 square feet of dedicated space with collaborative industry support and guidance. Further, numerous specialized programs exist in Georgia, representing a diverse funding base and talent pool, which complement this effort, such as the Center for Rehabilitation Technology and the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing, among others. And Georgia's physical infrastructure is also impressive: state networks include Peachnet (T1 lines and Switched-56, now upgrading to fiber), XNet (an experimental ATM link), and GSAMS (the Georgia Statewide Academic and Medical System), among others.

By leveraging on-going relationships between higher education research institutes like Georgia Tech's (known for technology application and transfer expertise) and Morris Brown's (known for outreach and training) -- and their respective relationships with industry, government and education communities—we can fully realize the promise of investment in telecommunication technologies for K-12, libraries, and health care providers. Georgia has an advanced networking infrastructure, many areas of the state remain severely underserved. Our model approach will provide a method for extending existing and emerging infrastructure to such areas, while providing a model that will benefit other states at the same time.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE:

Our concept proposes a partnership of higher education, supported by government and industry, to ensure informed decision-making at the local level. Specifically, we propose three key functions as "Foundations for the Future:"

- 1) Brokering technology information
- 2) Providing technical assistance
- 3) Providing targeted training

Each is more fully described below.

Brokering Technology Information

Informed purchasing decisions at the local level require an unbiased resource that can serve an information clearinghouse function for decision-makers. This function includes finding, filtering, and focusing information about multiple technologies for specific audiences. Decision-making tools and consultation services would be made available on an as-needed basis. This function would also serve as a conduit to specialized resources such as the existing network of service providers and the various specialized programs resident on both campuses with industry research support.

Providing Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be aimed at assisting schools and libraries in the process of defining and achieving their goals for technology-supported learning. This function would include conducting needs assessments and technology assessments, as well as providing a mechanism for addressing complicated implementation issues such as compatibility, expandability, and maintainability. We would assist decision-makers to cost-effectively answer such questions as: What equipment do I need? Where can I find it? How do I make the most of available options while building on existing capabilities? What evaluative criteria are appropriate for my particular situation? Addressing such questions in the early stages would serve to balance technology insertion efforts with teaching/learning enhancements. Emphasis on the comparative applicability/limitations of technologies in particular settings will ensure that purchasing decisions are synergistic with respect to the impact of limited investments. Further, the technical assistance function can assist local decision-makers with identifying and securing funding from available sources charged with promoting technology applications in schools and libraries.

Providing Targeted Training

This function builds on the considerable experience of higher education in using technology to teach challenging content in a variety of disciplines. Tools and techniques developed by higher education are generally readily transferrable to the K-12 environment, and this function would provide a mechanism for sharing this expertise. Specialized courses would be developed and made available to administrators, teachers, and parents/community members. Wherever possible, the emerging information infrastructure itself would serve as a delivery mechanism for such courses, supplemented by traditional methods of instructor-led courses provided on a regional basis throughout the state.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS

By providing an unbiased technology information resource to both rural and urban decision-makers at the local level, we can ensure quality purchasing decisions. By assisting K-12 administrators and teachers to become better informed consumers and users, we can stimulate effective deployment of appropriate technologies. By facilitating effective technology investments, we can promote industry responsiveness to educational needs, thereby accelerating the deployment of advanced telecommunications technologies through healthy market competition. By establishing a common standard, we can avoid problems associated with proprietary solutions and align industry's focus with user needs. And finally, by established a state source for assisting K-12 to meet their telecommunication needs, we can also provide the FCC with timely and relevant information on how advanced technologies are being applied in the various communities.

CONCLUSION

GTRI and MBRI jointly recommend that the FCC follow the approach of promoting partnerships of higher education's technology expertise with learning/teaching expertise, supplemented by industry know-how and government support, to optimize resources within financial constraints. By employing our concept of "Foundations for the Future" we can solidify the partnership of education, government, and industry to ensure equitable access and use of telecommunications technologies through informed purchasing decisions at the local level.

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Foundations For The Future

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A Partnership Concept for Ensuring
Universal K-12 Access to
Telecommunications Technologies

Presented by: Georgia Tech Research Institute &
Morris Brown Research Institute with State &
Industry Support

Ex Parte Presentation to Federal- State Joint Board on Universal Service, 09/06/96

Claudia Huff, Georgia Tech Research Institute

Jeff Evans, Georgia Tech Research Institute

Roosevelt Thomas, Morris Brown Research Institute

Chris Evans, Industry Representative

Issues to Address

- Telecommunications Act of 1996 Requires:
 - That rural and urban K-12 schools, libraries, etc., should have access to advanced technologies
 - That regular inquiries are conducted to see that advanced technologies are in fact becoming accessible

Our Recommendation:

- Leveraging investments and expertise in higher education to support K-12 through
 - brokering technology information
 - providing technical assistance
 - providing targeted training
- Achieve this by establishing a consortium of higher education, industry, and government at the state level

Our Model: Why Us?

- Extensive state investment in infrastructure and facilities such as:
 - State supported Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology
 - Specialized programs with diverse funding base
 - Existing state/community telecom networks
- Strong business orientation combined with relevant expertise and experience
- Builds on existing collaborative efforts among principals

Brokering Technology Information

- Information clearinghouse function
- Decision-making tools/consultation
- Conduit to specialized resources
 - network of service providers
 - multiple focused programs

Technical Assistance

- Needs assessments
- Technology assessments
- Implementation issues
 - compatibility
 - expandability
 - maintainability

Training

- Administrators
- Teachers
- Parents/community

Results / Benefits

- Provide unbiased resource to users
- Informed decision-making at local level
- Enhanced learning / teaching
- Synergistic impact of limited investments
- Alignment of industry focus with user needs
- Solidify partnership of education, government and industry communities
- Equitable access achieved earlier

Conclusions

- Best approach is to promote partnerships of
 - technology expertise
 - learning / teaching expertise
 - industry know-how
- Ensure equitable / timely access and use
 - common standard avoids proprietary solutions
 - optimize resources within financial constraints
- Evaluate, refine and replicate model